

Thorn (J.)

MEMORIAL

OF THE LATE

THOMAS W. BLATCHFORD, M. D.,

READ AT A MEETING OF THE GOVERNORS

OF THE

Box

MARSHALL INFIRMARY, TROY, N. Y.,

JANUARY 29, 1866,

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BY JAMES THORN, M. D.

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TROY, N. Y.:

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MEMORIAL

*Of the late Thomas W. Blatchford, M. D., read at a Meeting of the
Governors of the Marshall Infirmary, January 29, 1866, by
James Thorn, M. D.*

The President, in some pertinent and affecting remarks, alluded to the decease of the late Dr. THOMAS W. BLATCHFORD, one of the Governors of the Infirmary, and a member of the Medical Board from the foundation of the Institution, and stated that at his request Dr. Thorn had prepared an obituary notice of the deceased, which was then read:

DR. THORN'S ADDRESS.

Mr. President: Our community at large, and the institution which we here represent, have met with a severe loss in the death of Dr. Thomas W. Blatchford. I take the opportunity of this meeting of the Governors of the Marshall Infirmary, to give a slight tribute to the memory of our departed friend. Dr. Blatchford was born in Topham, Devonshire, England, July 20, 1794, and at the early age of nine months was brought by his parents to the United States of America. His early life was mostly spent in Lansingburgh, in this County, where he received his preliminary education, and in 1811 fitted himself for Union College, at which institution he graduated in 1815, commencing his medical education in New York city. In the winter of 1815 and 1816, he attended two courses of medical lectures in London, under Professors Cline and Astley Cooper.

The following year, having returned to New York, he finished his medical education by graduating at the College of Physicians in 1819. He practiced his profession in New York and Jamaica, Long Island, for some years, and came to Troy in 1828, where he has since resided.

For nearly forty years Dr. Blatchford has been known to us as one of the most upright, conscientious and truly good men. To say he was respected by all, would be but a small modicum of praise. Indeed, I may truly say, I never heard the voice of censure, or the whisper of calumny, uttered against his character. His fine mental talents, cultivated by an education of a superior order, made him a mark of observation and honor not only in this and neighboring cities, but throughout all parts of our country. In this city his memory will be endeared not only in the hearts of his many patients, whose sufferings he ever stood ready to alleviate, but as a philanthropist he devoted himself to the cause of education especially. Having been elected Trustee and School Commissioner, he served for several years as President of the Board of Education, and so energetically did he devote his time to the cause of free schools, that on retiring from that position he received the warm thanks of the whole community—one of our large buildings bearing the name of the Blatchford School.

In 1862, when so much suffering was produced in our city by the ravages of the great fire, Dr. Blatchford was appointed one of the relief committee, and devoted all his spare time to the relief of the sufferers—going from house to house, to find out their most urgent wants. Being associated with him as Mayor of the city at the time, I was enabled to bear testimony

to his great kindness and good judgment in the distribution of the funds contributed for the relief of the sufferers.

As I before stated, his fame as a scientific physician was appreciated and honored in other cities besides this, his place of residence. In 1847, he was elected President of the New York State Medical Society; in 1849, he was elected member of the American Association for the advancement of science; in 1856, he was elected Vice President of the American Medical Association; in 1857, he was elected Corresponding Fellow of the Academy of Sciences, St. Louis, Mo.; in 1860, he was elected Fellow of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York; and in 1861, was made President of the Alumni of that College. He has also been elected an honorary member of the State Medical Societies of Connecticut and New Jersey.

The Marshall Infirmary has lost one of its strong supporters and faithful physicians. His attention to the wants of the sick was constant, never allowing anything of a private nature to interfere with his public duties—giving his professional services with a kindness of manner peculiar to himself. By his will he has bequeathed his large medical library, over six hundred volumes, to this institution; giving thus a proof of the esteem he held it in.

As a physician, Dr. Blatchford was emphatically a scientific man. His varied literary acquirements, both in medical subjects, as well as the arts and sciences generally, placed him in a very elevated position. His professional character was deservedly held in high esteem. His useful life was one of untiring labor, in order to respond to the duties of his calling. Punc-

tuality in his association with his medical brethren, was one of the cardinal points in his character, and to do good was his constant aim, never stopping to consider, when called on to administer medical services, anything, but that his patients were fellow-beings in distress. He made sacrifices, both of time and comfort, for the suffering poor, often contributing from his own means to relieve their necessities. He showed the kindest feelings of humanity to all, irrespective of wealth or station, and though strongly attached to his own religious tenets, he never interfered with the convictions and opinions of others. It may be truly said that Dr. Blatchford "died in the harness." He had attended two night calls just before he was seized with his last illness, going from his sleigh to the bed, from which he never rose again.

And so has gone from among us the large-hearted friend, the good citizen, the skilled physician—the man whose character was without blemish or reproach. His life was not spent in vain. Although dead, his memory lives, a peerless example to us who survive him. While every citizen mourns that the sickle of death has cut down one whose Autumnal years promised continued usefulness, his brother physicians appreciate most keenly his loss. They know the trials, the labors, the anxieties by day and night, that formed the warp and woof of his existence; and thus over the fresh grave of an associate, are not these lines a fitting epitaph?

Fear no more the heat of the Sun
Or the tedious Winter blast,
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
And the dream of life is past.
Monarchs, sages, peasants, must
Follow thee and come to dust.

On motion of Dr. Thorn it was

Resolved, That we, the Governors of the Marshall Infirmary, have sustained an irreparable loss in the death of our late associate, Dr. THOMAS W. BLATCHFORD. His place in the councils of our Board can never be wholly filled, and his labors in the care of our institution have been such as few can ever equal. Faithful, untiring, kind and courteous, he combined traits rarely seen united in one man; and while thus deploring his death, we commend to all the legacy of his life and character as a treasure more enduring than any earthly riches.

Resolved, That in the bequest by the deceased of his valuable medical library to the Marshall Infirmary, we recognize his uniform pride in this institution and generosity towards it at the close of his life. Thus one of the latest of many acts of kindness, displayed "the ruling passion strong in death."

Resolved, That we gratefully accept the legacy bequeathed to us by the deceased, and that we will cause the books to be placed separately in an apartment to be called the Blatchford Medical Library of the Marshall Infirmary.

On motion of Mr. Edwards it was

Resolved, That we have listened to the memorial read by Dr. James Thorn, the life-long friend of the deceased, and regard it as an appropriate tribute to the memory of our departed friend; that the thanks of this Board be tendered to Dr. Thorn for the same, and a copy be requested for publication.

Resolved, That a copy of the memorial just read by Dr. Thorn, and of these resolutions, be presented by the President to the family of the late Dr. Blatchford.

